



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/568,689	02/17/2006	Shinsuke Miyamoto	1032404-000144	2776
21839	7590	02/09/2009	EXAMINER	
BUCHANAN, INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC POST OFFICE BOX 1404 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1404				KENNY, DANIEL J
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3633				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
02/09/2009		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ADIPFDD@bipc.com

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/568,689	MIYAMOTO ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	DANIEL KENNY	3633

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 February 2006.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 9-16 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 9-14 and 16 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 17 February 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date See Continuation Sheet.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other: _____.

Continuation of Attachment(s) 3. Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08), Paper No(s)/Mail Date :18 April 2008, 17 February 2006.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

During a telephone conversation with James LaBarre on 12/12/2008 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Species I, claims 9-14, and 16. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claim 15 is withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species:

Species I, represented by Fig. 6

Species II, represented by Fig. 12

Species III, represented by Fig. 13

The species are independent or distinct because claims to the different species recite the mutually exclusive characteristics of such species. In addition, these species are not obvious variants of each other based on the current record.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claim 9 is generic.

There is an examination and search burden for these patentably distinct species due to their mutually exclusive characteristics. The species require a different field of search (e.g., searching different classes/subclasses or electronic resources, or

employing different search queries); and/or the prior art applicable to one species would not likely be applicable to another species; and/or the species are likely to raise different non-prior art issues under 35 U.S.C. 101 and/or 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected species, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

The election of the species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the election of species requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse. Traversal must be presented at the time of election in order to be considered timely. Failure to timely traverse the requirement will result in the loss of right to petition under 37 CFR 1.144. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable on the elected species.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the species unpatentable over the

prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other species.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which depend from or otherwise require all the limitations of an allowable generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 9, 10, and 16 – are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent (JP 2000-261017).

Claims 9 and 16 – JP '017 discloses an apparatus for holding a plurality of solar cell units that are plate- shaped, comprising:

a mounting member (11a, 11c, and both vertical members of element 11) configured to be fixed onto a roof;
a plurality of fixtures (13); and
a frame member including to-be-sandwiched portions (3a) configured to be sandwiched and fixed between the mounting member and the fixtures, and unit supporting portions (bottom, horizontal portions of the frame) configured to support ends of the solar cell units, wherein the frame member includes projection plane regions

(planes comprising the top and bottom surfaces of 13a) configured to project the solar cell units and the unit supporting portions directly underneath, and

the to-be-sandwiched portions are positioned inside the projection plane regions, and are formed almost immediately below the ends of the solar cell units.

Claim 10 - The frame member includes a groove (4) in which a first end of the solar cell unit is fitted, a downward extending portion (long., innermost vertical wall of the frame) that bends and extends downward from a middle of a lower plate (horizontal member of the frame connected to the top of the “downward extending portion”) of the groove almost perpendicularly to the lower plate, and the to-be-sandwiched portion projects sideward from the downward extending portion.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 11-14 - are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '017 in view of Japanese Patent (JP2003-298098A).

Claim 11 - The mounting member is convex in shape (as defined in the rejection of claim 9) and has steps (formed by the junction of the outer surface portions of 11a and 11c, one on each side), and is placed such that the convex portion faces towards sunlight, a space surrounded by a pair of facing frame members, and the frame member is arranged on the steps of the mounting member.

JP '017 does not expressly disclose the frame member having holes in which electrical cables of the solar cell unit are inserted, and the space surrounded by the facing frame members housing the cables. JP '098 discloses a frame member (Fig. 4) having holes (23b) in which electrical cables (17) of the solar cell unit are inserted, and a space surrounded by facing frame members housing the cables (Fig. 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the present invention was made to insert the cables in frame holes and surround them as taught by JP '098 in the for convenience.

Claim 12 - The frame member includes a concave portion (the outermost corner portion of 13a that directly contacts the junction of the outer surface portions of 11a and 11c is inherently concave, even to a small degree, because this outside corner must have at least a small radius) configured to be engaged with a step (formed by the junction of the outer surface portions of 11a and 11c) of the mounting member.

Claim 13 - The fixtures and the mounting member are fixed with bolts (14), and a cover (23) with a flat upper surface is provided between the pair of facing frame members, for internal protection.

Claim 14 - The cover includes a guide rail (long vertical portions of the cover) at its center, and the fixture includes fastening portions (portion located on the underside surface of the fixture that actually contacts the to-be-sandwiched portions) configured to come into contact with the to-be-sandwiched portions of the frame members, and guide supports (prongs on top of the fixture) that engage with the guide rail to guide and support the cover.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL KENNY whose telephone number is (571)272-9951. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri. 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Glessner can be reached on 571 272 6843. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jeanette E Chapman/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3633

/D. K./
Examiner, Art Unit 3633